

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PINR, IT, EFIN

SUBJECT: CONTRASTING VIEWS OF STORTI AND BENVENUTO

1. SUMMARY. EXTENSIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LEADERS OF ITALY'S TWO NON-COMMUNIST LABOR FEDERATIONS REVEAL THE CONTRASTING OBJECTIVES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR LEADERS. BENVENUTO OF UIL VIEWS THE COMMUNISTS AS BENT ON ACHIEVING THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS THROUGH MOVING SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE RIGHT. THE SOCIALISTS OPPOSE THIS STRONGLY BY OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT AND BY ESTABLISHING A LEFT ALTERNATIVE TO THE DC-PCI ENTENTE. STORTI OF CISL SEES THE COMMUNISTS, IN THEIR CURRENT POSTURE OF MODERATION, AS USEFUL ELEMENTS IN HELPING SOLVE THE NATION'S ECONOMIC ILLS. HE THINKS THE PCI HAS COME A LONG WAY, BUT STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE THEY CAN BE ACCEPTED AS A DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THE SOCIALISTS, ON THE
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OTHER HAND, HE SEES AS VISCERAL NAY-SAYERS. BENVENUTO IS CONCERNED

ABOUT THE FORMATION OF A FORMAL OPPOSITION GROUP, UNDER EX-SECRETARY GENERAL VANNI, WITHIN THE UIL. STORTI IS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN PROGRAMMING AN ORDERLY SUCCESSION TO HIMSELF. BOTH MEN EXPRESS CONSIDERABLE REGRET OVER THE LOW STATE OF RELATIONS WITH THE AFL-CIO. END SUMMARY.

2. INTERVIEWS WITH THE TWO TOP NON-COMMUNIST LEADERS OF ITALIAN LABOR -- CISL'S BRUNO STORTI AND UIL'S GIORGIO BENVENUTO -- REVEAL THE CONTRASTING OBJECTIVES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR LEADERS. STORTI, SOON TO LEAVE CISL AFTER MORE THAN 20 YEARS TO TAKE ON THE PRESIDENCY OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS AND LABOR (CNEL), EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO ACHIEVE JUST MEASURES FOR REDUCING ITALIAN LABOR COSTS, THROUGH APPROPRIATE AUSTERITY MEASURES, IN ORDER TO RENDER ITALY'S ECONOMY MORE COMPETITIVE. THE COMMUNISTS, HE SAID, ARE LENDING THEMSELVES TO THIS OBJECTIVE, AND THEIR COOPERATION MUST THEREFORE BE UTILIZED FOR SO VITAL AN END. BENVENUTO, ON THE OTHER HAND, ACCUSED CISL AND THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED CGIL OF CONSPIRING TO MONOPOLIZE ITALIAN LABOR, SQUEEZING OUT THE UIL FROM ANY MEANINGFUL ROLE. THE LEADERS OF THOSE TWO ORGANIZATIONS, MIRRORING THE POLITICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE COMMUNISTS, REACH AGREEMENT BETWEEN THEMSELVES, LEAVING BENVENUTO AND THE UIL TO PLAY ASSIGNED ROLES, HE SAID. MIRRORING HIS OWN (SOCIALIST) PARTY, BENVENUTO ASSERTED THAT THE MAJOR THREAT FACING ITALY WAS NOT ECONOMIC COLLAPSE BUT THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE (I.E., THE COALITIONAL RULE OF THE COUNTRY BY THE DC AND THE PCI), AND THAT IT IS THE PSI DUTY TO FRUSTRATE THE IMMINENT REALIZATION OF SAME.

3. STORTI REGARDS THE COMMUNISTS AS HAVING COME A LONG WAY TOWARD RESPONSIBLE DEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOR, BUT REQUIRING CONSIDERABLE FURTHER EVOLUTION (ANOTHER TEN YEARS, HE SAID) BEFORE THEIR DEMOCRATIC BONA FIDES COULD BE ACCEPTED. THE SOCIALISTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE THE "MAXIMALISTS", PARTICULARLY IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT. BENVENUTO VIEWS THE COMMUNISTS AS HAVING SHIFTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE RIGHT, IN A CALCULATED AND INCREASINGLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO REALIZE THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND THIS ESTABLISH PCI-DC HEGEMONY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SOCIALISTS AND THE "LAYPARTIES." THE RESPONSE OF BENVENUTO AND THE SOCIALISTS IS TO OPPOSE THIS BY TAKING A POSITION TO THE LEFT OF THE COMMUNISTS, AND BY OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. BENVENUTO

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ALSO ADMITTED TO A SECRET PSI FANTASY. ASKED WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT THE SOCIALISTS ENVISAGED, GIVEN THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE CURRENT ONE AND THEIR REJECTION OF A RETURN TO THE DC-PSI FORMULA, HE SAID THE PSI WOULD LIKE A "LAY" GOVERNMENT WITH THE PSI IN CONTROL, AND BOTH THE DC AND THE PCI ON THE OUTSIDE. SECOND CHOICE: A PSI/DC GOVERNMENT ("NOTE THE SEQUENCE," SAID BENVENUTO). BENVENUTO WAS UNDISMAYED WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE STATISTICS INVOLVED, I.E., THE "LAY PARTIES" IN THE AGGREGATE COMMAND LESS

THAN TWENTY PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE.

4. BOTH STORTI AND BENVENUTO ARE FACING ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS, IF OF A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT CHARACTER. RECENTLY OUSTED UIL SECRETARY GENERAL VANNI HAS CALLED A MEETING OF THE UIL "MINORITY" FOR DECEMBER 18-19. BENVENUTO EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER THIS DEVELOPMENT. HIS DEAR, HE SAID, WAS NOT THAT VANNI'S FORMER COALITION MIGHT BE RECONSTITUTED, LEADING TO A REVERSAL OF LEADERSHIP (THOUGH HE SAID VANNI'S EFFORTS WERE WELL FINANCED, INCLUDING, HE INFERRED, AMERICAN MONEY), BUT BECAUSE IT REPRESENTED THE ENTRENCHMENT OF DIVISIVENESS IN THE UIL AT A TIME WHEN CISL AND THE CGIL WERE GANGING UP TO DOMINATE THE LABOR SCENE. STORTI, FOR HIS PART, IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME OF HIS OWN SUCCESSION. DEPUTY SECGEN MACARIO IS VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS CHOICE TO TAKE OVER, NOT ONLY UNTIL THE CISL CONGRESS TENTATIVELY SET FOR LATE SPRING, BUT FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM THEREAFTER. THE BATTLE INVOLVES FILLING THE NUMBER TWO SLOT. STORTI POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE CANDIDATE FOR SAME, NAMELY, CANNITI; "OTHERS" HAVE MERELY STATED THAT THEY OPPOSE THE CARNITI CANDIDACY WHICH, IF INSISTED UPON, WOULD FORCE "THEM" TO PUT FORWARD THEIR OWN CANDIDATE, I.E., MARINI. STORTI NOTED THAT HE FINESSED THIS PROBLEM WHEN HE ORIGINALLY TOOK OVER FROM PASTORE, A YEAR IN ADVANCE OF THE CISL CONGRESS: STORTI REFUSED TO ASSUME THE TITLE OF SECRETARY GENERAL, PROCEEDED TO LEAD CISL AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL (THUS OBTAINING ANY INTER-CONGRESS BATTLE TO NAME A NEW DEPUTY) UNTIL THE NEXT CONGRESS. HE INDICATED THAT THERE WAS RESISTANCE (PRESUMABLY FROM MACARIO) TO IMPLEMENTING THIS SAME ADMIRABLE TACTIC IN THE PRESENT SITUATION.

5. BOTH BENVENUTO AND STORTI EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE NATURE OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT. BENVENUTO FEARED THAT A FALSE IMPRESSION OF THE UIL'S SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP WAS BEING HARBOURED BY THE AFL-CIO, COMPLAINING THAT THEY WERE STILL CONFIDENTIAL

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BEING REGARDED AS THE VILLAGE IDIOTS OF ITALIAN LABOR. IN TRUTH, HE ASSERTED, THE SOCIALISTS WERE THE REAL ANTI-COMMUNISTS. VIRTUALLY EVERYONE ELSE, INCLUDING BOTH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE REPUBLICANS, WERE EITHER TREATING THE COMMUNISTS IN A MOST GINGERLY FASHION OR WERE ACTUALLY SPONSORING PCI ENTRANCE INTO INCREASED GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY. AT ONE POINT, BENVENUTO ASSERTED THAT VANNI WAS SEEKING TO UNSEAT HIM ON THE GROUNDS THAT BENVENUTO OPPOSED UNITY OF LABOR ACTION. HE ASSERTED FURTHER THAT VANNI HAS CONSULTED WITH CGIL CHIEF LAMA ABOUT POSSIBLY BRINGING THE UIL REPUBLICAN FACTION INTO THE CGIL. STORTI WAS EQUALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMAGE OF CISL ON 16TH STREET IN WASHINGTON, BUT WAS RESIGNED TO SCANT PROSPECT OF IMPROVEMENT "AS LONG AS THE CURRENT GENERATION OF AFL-CIO LEADERS REMAINS IN CONTROL." STORTI INDICATED THAT, ON THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR SCENE, THE FRENCH CGT WAS NOW PREPARED TO ACCEPT ALL THE CONDITIONS WHICH THE ITALIAN

CGIL MET WHEN IT WAS ADMITTED TO THE ETUC. HE DID NOT ELABORATE ON THIS STATEMENT, LEAVING THE IMPRESSION THAT CGT ENTRANCE INTO THE ETUC MIGHT NOT BE FAR OFF. THE ICFTU WAS IN DIFFICULTY AND BADLY NEEDED THE RETURN OF THE AFL-CIO TO LEAVEN THE CONTENDING FORCES OF THE FREE LABOR MOVEMENT. HE SAID THE ICFTU ANNUALLY "PLAYS A SERENADE UNDER THE AFL-CIO BALCONY" BUT THE MAIDEN, TO DATE, HAS DECLINED TO RESPOND. THE WFTU, STORTI FELT, WAS IN ADVANCING DISARRAY AND WAS NO LONGER REGARDED AS A VIABLE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION BY ITS WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFILIATES OR EVEN SOME OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN LABOR CENTERS.

6. COMMENT: BENVENUTO GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF BEING GENUINELY CONCERNED WITH BEING ISOLATED BOTH WITHIN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND FROM THE AMERICAN UNIONS. THE PERSONAL ANTIPATHY BETWEEN HIMSELF AND VANNI WAS QUITE EVIDENT. HE ACCUSED VANNI, FOR EXAMPLY, OF A "SCORCHED EARTH" POLICY WHEN THE LATTER WAS UNSEATED, ALLEGING THAT VANNI HAD TAKEN ALL THE TYPEWRITERS AND OTHER OFFICE FURNITURE WITH HIM, LEAVING ONLY A COUCH AND TWO CHAIRS. INCIDENTALLY, "BABYSITTER" OF THE WEEK WAS WALTER GALBUSERA, HEAD OF THE UIL'S METAL WORKERS UNION IN MILAN (SEE ROME'S 19772). STORTI'S DISCOURSE WAS LARGELY IN THE FORM OF A VALDEICTORY -- HE EXPRESSED TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN RECEIVING THE CNEL APPOINTMENT VERY SOON. THE ONLY SEMBLANCE OF A REGRET HE EXPRESSED REGARDING HIS PAST ACTIONS WAS WITH RESPECT TO HIS RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT, CONCEDED THAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ILLTIMED.BEAUDRY

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